Question on Notice

No. 195

Asked on 27 April 2004

MR FINN asked the Minister for Transport and Main Roads (MR LUCAS)—

QUESTION:

(1) Will he outline measures taken to reduce the impact on residents of noise emanating from the Moolabin rail yards?

(2) How are noise incidents being monitored?

ANSWER:

Thank you for the opportunity to tell you about how rail noise emanating from the Moolabin rail yards is being managed. I appreciate your interest in this matter.

(1) Tennyson is the residential suburb that abuts the Moolabin rail yards. QR, in conjunction with the Tennyson Residents Association (TRA), developed and implemented a Noise Management Plan (NMP) for the yards in early 2002.

QR remains committed to the NMP and is also currently reviewing a draft NMP from Pacific National to apply when it takes over operation of Moolabin in early 2005. The NMP requires the use of larger locomotives, which do not have to rev as hard compared to smaller locomotives to do the same amount of work. It also requires that QR work with users of the yards to reduce shunting, for example by loading freight for the same destination in blocks, rather than individually.

Also, as required under the NMP, operations are constantly observed and reviewed, with a view to continually reducing the noise from activities such as shunting and loading. Complaints are fast-tracked and quickly actioned.

(2) A number has been set up (1800 675 702), so that residents can quickly report on any noise related issue they are not happy about, at no cost to themselves. All issues are logged in the one place, so that any patterns are easily identified. Problems are immediately passed onto the responsible person to rectify.

The latest comprehensive noise monitoring was undertaken over the week beginning 19 April 2004, at two of the most exposed residences in Tennyson. The methodology was developed and agreed to by QR, an acoustical expert and the TRA. The results are being analysed to determine the level and source (shunting clashes, locomotive, loading, through traffic etc) of any problematic noise. The results will also be used to model the likely noise environment over the larger residential area.

The monitoring report is due for release in late May 2004. If any problematic noise is identified, discussions will be held with all stakeholders to develop ways of dealing with the concern(s), which could include operational and/or physical controls.